DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 359 005 RC 019 178

AUTHOR Spicker, Howard; And Others
TITLE Rural Gifted Education in a Multicultural Society.
PUB DATE Mar 93
NOTE 10p.; In: Montgomery, Diane, Ed. Rural America: Where All Innovations Begin. Conference Proceedings (Savannah, GA, March 11-13, 1993); see RC 019 153.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Black Education; Blacks; Consortia; Cultural Differences; Economically Disadvantaged; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; *Identification; *Mexican American Education; Mexican Americans; *Rural Education; Special Education; *Student Characteristics; Whites
IDENTIFIERS African Americans

ABSTRACT

Economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse children are underrepresented in programs for the academically gifted. SPRING (Special Populations Rural Information Network for the Gifted) is a consortium of Indiana University, New Mexico State University, and Converse College (South Carolina) whose major concern is the identification and programming needed for culturally diverse gifted students in rural schools. SPRING I developed identification methods and instructional materials for Appalachian gifted children. This paper focuses on plans for SPRING II, which will expand the consortium's work to three additional subpopulations of gifted rural youth: African-Americans at three South Carolina schools, Hispanics (primarily Mexican-Americans) at a New Mexico school, and Mescalero Apaches at a New Mexico public school. Parent and peer information; child products; teacher observations; and test data on intelligence, achievement, and creativity will be analyzed for similarities and differences among populations and for the strengths and weaknesses of each population in various skill and knowledge areas. As in SPRING I, a curriculum will be planned for each population that is congruent with that group's strengths. Tables describe the assessment instruments and outline the characteristics of White Appalachian and Black gifted children in disadvantaged rural areas versus those of gifted children in advantaged middle-class areas. Special concerns in the identification of Mexican-American and tribal Native American students are also discussed. (SV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Diane Montgomery
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Howard Spicker
Indiana University - Bloomington, IN

Ruth Fletcher
New Mexico State University - Las Cruces, NM

Diane Montgomery
Oklahoma State University - Stillwater, OK

Nancy Breard
Converse College - Spartanburg, SC

ED359005

Rural Gifted Education in a Multicultural Society

The purpose of this session is to discuss the philosophy and working plans for SPRING II (Special Populations Rural Information Network for the Gifted, second phase), a consortium consisting of multiple institutions (Indiana University, New Mexico State University, and Converse College). The project has as its major focus the identification and programming needed to meet the needs of culturally diverse populations of students who are gifted and not commonly identified for special educational programs in schools that serve them. Specifically, the procedures for identifying students who are Appalachian, African American, Hispanic, and native American Indian and attending rural schools will be discussed herein.

Background

The primary purpose of the consortium is to address the identification, programming, teacher training, and distance education needs specific to finding and educating rural gifted children from economically different and/or ethnically diverse backgrounds. The instrumentation developed through SPRING I for rural students from Appalachia who are gifted will be modified and evaluated within the context of three additional subpopulations of gifted rural youth: African American, Hispanic, and native American Indian. An expanded explanation of SPRING I can be found elsewhere in these proceedings.

To maintain the consistency and necessary articulation between identification and programming for gifted students, the curriculum for which students were identified was adapted to fit the strengths of the population identified. Methods and materials were developed in SPRING I and integrated among all content areas, but with a science educational focus. The unit specifically developed used a thematic study of water in an environmental science context. Much of the curriculum to be developed for SPRING II will be adapted, designed and delivered via distance technology. Although several pre-service and in-service teacher training activities combine with the development of student abilities as integral components of SPRING II, the current discussion will center on the identification of giftedness among economically and ethnically different groups of students.

Need for the Project

In their recent study on gifted identification policies of the states, Coleman and Gallagher (1992) found that the vast majority of states have written policies calling for the identification and provision of services to gifted students from special populations. In addition, a number of non-traditional approaches for identifying special populations of gifted children have been advanced in recent years (For identifying

RC019178

gifted Hispanic children, see Barkan and Bernal, 1991 and Zappia, 1989; for gifted African American children, see Frasier, 1989 and Patton, Prillamon, and VanTassell-Baska, 1990; for gifted Native American children, see Florey and Tafoya, 1988, Tonemah, 1987, and Montgomery, 1989; for gifted disadvantaged rural identification, see Spicker, 1992). Although it appears that state policy encourages the inclusion of all populations of gifted children in local educational efforts and information is available to local education agencies, the facts remains that students from economically and ethnically diverse cultures are under-represented in gifted programs. A comprehensive program linking the advice from the researchers to practical procedures within policy in various states will provide a model to resolve the problems facing LEAs as they attempt to better serve the educational needs of all gifted students.

The procedures already developed for identifying rural disadvantaged Appalachian gifted children are applicable for identifying white, rural, disadvantaged gifted children in New England, the Midwest, and the Northwest. Research is still needed to determine whether or not the same procedures will identify rural disadvantaged African American gifted children in the deep South, and rural Hispanic and Native American gifted children in the Southwest. Our identification efforts are, therefore, focused on South Carolina and New Mexico respectively. Parent and peer information, child products, teacher observations, as well as intelligence, achievement, and creativity test data will be collected from each site and analyzed for similarities and differences in characteristics of gifted children among the four rural diverse populations. These analyses will be used to develop procedures specific to the identification of gifted children from each rural ethnic group.

The results of the SPRING I project are reviewed elsewhere in this document with greater detail. Here, we will consider the major findings regarding identification strategies and the ways this information will be used to guide the assessment and identification efforts for each of the three subpopulations for SPRING II. Following a brief review of the identification procedures developed for Appalachian students will be a description of the concerns and preliminary plans for identification procedures for African American, Hispanic, and native American Indian students.

Rural Economically Disadvantaged Gifted Students

Table 1 represents the essential findings of SPRING I with Appalachian gifted children. The list draws a comparison between the characteristics of the typical, usually advantaged, dominant culture students who are found using the common intelligence and academic assessment measures with those characteristics of rural gifted children that mitigate against typical and obvious identification. It was found that there are certain characteristics that may be perceived as distractors to traditional assessment techniques, termed "Negative" for SPRING I, and other characteristics that may serve as unique strength areas, called "Positive."

The strength areas are used to construct nontraditional assessment procedures that would allow traits of giftedness to emerge. For example, a strength characteristics of rural gifted children is that they may demonstrate exceptional ability in one area with average ability in others rather than perform consistently well in several schools subjects. Another strength is that rural children are very likely to have interests outside the classroom. Often, the ability may be in mechanical areas or environmental sciences. Parents, teachers and other school personnel were trained to recognize such signs of ability (Spicker, 1992).

Table 2 represents the strategies tested during the identification phase of SPRING I. These will be adapted for each population, based on input from parents, teachers, students and community members.

Table 1. Comparison of Characteristics

CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Advantaged Gifted Students Urban, middle class children who accept values of the dominant culture	**Disadvantaged Rural Gifted Children**
DETRACTORS	
1. Speak standard English	1. Speak a non-standard regional dialect
2. Are verbal and have good communication skills	2. Are less verbal in oral communication skills
3. Are active participants in classroom activities	3. Tend to be passive participants in classroom activities
4. Perform tasks within time limitations	4. Are relatively unaffected by time pressures; work slowly but meticulously
5. Complete classroom assignments and homework	5. Are likely to be lax in completing assignments and homework
6. Perform well on standardized tests	6. Are not likely to perform well on standardized tests
STRENGTHS	
7. Perform well in all subjects	7. May show exceptional ability in one subject and average to below average in others
8. Produce written work in proper grammatical form with good spelling and legible handwriting	8. Have written products that may be of high quality in content but of poor quality in grammatical form, spelling, and handwriting
9. Demonstrate their strengths within the academic classroom	9. More likely to demonstrate their strengths outside the classroom, e.g. auto and tractor repair, knowledge specific to their rural environment, creativity related to 4-H projects, talent in music and the performing arts
10. Usually perform equally well on verbal and non-verbal tests	10. Are likely to perform better on non-verbal than verbal tests

© Project S.P.R.I.N.G., Indiana University

Table 2. Instruments Used For Assessment

Participant observation, including unstructured interviewing -

implementation of, and participation in inservice training, implementation of identification procedures, implementation of new curriculum, parent groups. Involves qualitative description of activities and involvement of participants, to be compared with descriptions of intended activities.

Semistructured interviewing, open ended questionnaires -

experts' and parents' views of identification procedures and materials and of new science curriculum and materials (formative assessment instruments to be developed specifically for these materials);

students', teacher's and parents' beliefs about individual students' abilities (modification of instruments used in Guskin, Zimmerman, Okolo, & Peng, 1986).

Structured interviews and questionnaires -

inservice training, satisfaction with identification, curriculum innovations (rating scales developed specifically to evaluate these materials and activities);

teachers' perceptions of the nature of giftedness and talent and their perceived relationship to rural, ethnic, and economic status (modification of instruments used in Guskin, Peng, & Simon, 1992).

Demographic indices -

Geographic setting (rural), ethnicity, economic status (e.g., participation in free lunch program); to be filled out by evaluation staff, based on school records.

Portfolio assessment -

Student products, including videotapes and project reports and/or materials resulting from the new curriculum will be collected and described by students; these will then be assessed by multiple judges, based on criteria related to the curriculum and to definitions of creativity, giftedness, and talent. These procedures are currently being piloted in Project SPRING.

Standardized tests, grades -

Although not a primary data source, this information will be obtained from records fro descriptive purposes.

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Streamlined Form).

Includes items involving verbal and nonverbal fluency and originality, as well as nonverbal flexibility and originality (Torrance, Wu, and Ando, 1980). This instrument will be used largely for descriptive purposes.

The philosophy that will be maintained is the goal to identify the ability areas that are valued by those groups involved and invite students to demonstrate their strength areas in appropriate curricular areas.

A particularly valuable component of SPRING I was the curriculum which was planned to be congruent with the identification procedures. The study of water was developed as an integrated theme maximizing students' strengths of ecological, environmental and mechanical knowledge and skills. It is anticipated that many of these areas of study will be applicable to other rural gifted populations underserved in schools, although behaviors or skills may be manifested in different ways.

This framework of understanding will lead the work that will be done in identification procedures at each of the schools in the consortium. The Hispanic and native American Indian populations will be explored in New Mexico and the African American population will be investigated at three school sites in South Carolina.

African American Gifted Students

Table 3 represents potential characteristics of rural African American children in response to the SPRING model of differences (from dominant, economic culture), detractors (areas that have previously been considered negative), and focus strength areas of the particular children in the population (to be determined in detail in the field study).

In South Carolina, prior to the state's Education Improvement Act in 1984, each school district set its own identification criteria for admission to academically gifted programs and few African American children were identified. In 1984 a comprehensive statewide identification system was implemented. This system is more inclusive, identifying more African American children than were previously included; however, the present identification system relies heavily on standardized achievement and aptitude tests. As a result, in most districts, regardless of the percent of African American children in the school age population, only five to ten percent of the children in the academically gifted program are African Americans.

Hispanic Gifted Students

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in the United States. Indeed, in some areas or states they comprise a majority of the population; therefore, the choice of New Mexico to learn more about the application of various alternative identification methods and procedure seems logical. The national origins of Hispanic students varies widely. With the choice of public school close to the Mexican border, there is greater chances for the population to be somewhat similar (as compared to Puerto Rican, Latino, Spanish American, etc.).

Like other students from ethnically diverse backgrounds, the Hispanic gifted student comes from a family with a different value system and behavior patterns (Leung, 1981). Often, parents do not have the same academic preparation as parents of students from the economic culture. Hispanic children are most likely bilingual with Spanish spoken in the home. Banda (1989) recommends strategies to maximize the cultural strengths of gifted Hispanic children in identification procedures. She suggests leadership ability, bilingualism and individual student profiles may be helpful in discovering giftedness among Hispanic students.

Table 3. Characteristics of Gifted Students

Advantaged Gifted Children (urban/suburban, middle class children who accept values of the dominant culture)	Disadvantaged Rural African American Children
Differences	
1. Speak standard English	1. Often use non-standard English with standard English as a second language (Cohen, 1989)
2. Are verbal and have good oral communication skills	2. Oral traditional with language rich in imagery and humor (Baldwin, 1989)
3. Are active participants in classroom activities	3. Often defensive and/or withdrawn in school setting (Rhodes, 1992) and prefer kinesthetic style of learning (Ewing & Yong, 1992)
4. Perform tasks within time limitation	4. Use approximate time instead of accurate time (Hillard, 1976)
5. Complete classroom assignment and homework	5. School motivation and performance are lower than Anglo American children (Sparling, 1989)
6. Perform well on standardized tests	6. As a group African American children do not perform well on standardized measures (Hadaway & Mark-Schroer, 1992)
7. Perform well in all subjects	7. Perform well outside of academic setting in ability to manipulate two cultures (Ford, 1992), social intelligence and feeling of responsibility for community (Horowitz & O'Brien, 1985)
8. Produce written work in proper grammatical form with good spelling and legible handwriting	8. Responsiveness to concrete, ability to improvise with common materials, and problem solving orientation (Torrance, 1989) rather than high verbal skills in writing
9. Demonstrate their strengths within the academic classroom	9. May demonstrate strengths outside the class in eye-hand coordination, skilled body move-movement, physical stamina (Horowitz & O'Brien, 1985)
10. Usually perform equally well on verbal and non-verbal tests	10. Perform better on non-verbal measures (Frasier, 1989)

It is anticipated that the rural Hispanic students will know Spanish, many of them speaking it in their homes. There may be a high level of local community involvement for school athletic events, church celebrations, large family gatherings for traditional holidays or local political campaigns. These events may provide information about cultural beliefs of exceptional ability. The family will need to play an important role in the identification of abilities expressed outside of the classroom.

New Mexico will present an interesting policy difference with services for gifted students categorized as a special education program. Although given special permission by the State Department of Education to study an experimental program, the procedures established will need to be evaluated in the context of long-term consequences for students, teachers and other school personnel and parents.

Native American Indian Gifted Students

With hundreds of Indian tribes, some not yet formally recognized by the United States government, the description of giftedness among rural youngsters is particularly problematic. Seen as separate governmental entities, tribes become an institution as well as a community from which to solicit information about cultural giftedness. The tribe chosen to work with in New Mexico is the Mescalero Apache, a particularly autonomous and self reliant group of Native Americans. It is believed, however, if a model procedure will work with a public school district that serves a Native American community with few Native American teachers on faculty (an occurrence that is common in public schools with large concentrations of Indian students), then perhaps some of the procedures could be useful in situations where there is a more flexible boundary between the tribe and the dominant or economic culture.

Indian children are diverse in nature. Some may live with their families and extended families on and off the reservation (Little Soldier, 1985; Tippiconnic, 1990) and may likely attend public schools as well as Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools or tribally controlled schools. Additionally, there is great diversity of acculturation, from very traditionally tribal to Native Americans who are more closely identified with the economic or dominant culture. Little Soldier (1985) suggested this continuum was represented by the span in the middle with those Indians who were bicultural; whereas the people at either end of the continuum are monocultural either representing Native American or Euro American. Faas (1982) found three distinct cultural groups of Native Americans, each with a different opinion about giftedness depending on the degree of tribal traditionalism represented by the group.

Native Americans also differ from tribe to tribe in custom, belief, values and social practice (Locust, 1988; Noley, 1989). Finding common elements or beliefs about giftedness that can be said to be "Indian" may not be as useful as it is controversial. Therefore, our procedures will focus on the values, world view, cognitive structures, stories and metaphors that are used to describe exceptional ability among one tribe of people represented by those attending public school on the reservation.

A vast amount of time will be invested in the tribal community. Finding acceptance through one or two informants, we will be using elders, community leaders, storytellers and medicine people to collect information about attitudes of exceptional ability, learning and school. The tribal language(s) will be assessed for its usage among youngsters and its structure for describing exceptional ability.

Equipped with some preliminary information about tribal beliefs, teachers will be informed of ways to weave student strengths into a thematic curriculum. It is likely that an ecological theme would be appropriate and would match well with students identified for SPRING II in Indiana or South

Carolina. Additionally, after students are identified and placed in special programs, community members and parents must be invited to continue their involvement. The role of mentors, models and adult tribal teachers may be a cultural value upon which to built program services and evaluation. It is apparent that shared responsibility for the education of the gifted will lead to a successful program.

Summary

It has been well documented that economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse children are underrepresented in programs for the academically gifted. Project SPRING II plans to implement identification and programming procedures to determine successful methods to increase the involvement of these groups in school programs for students who are gifted. Flexibility and adaptability will be the key approaches as each identification program is planned and implemented with school personnel, families and community members.

References

Baldwin, A. Y (1989). The purpose of education for gifted black students. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II,* pp. 237-245. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Banda, C. (1989). Promoting pluralism and power. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II,* pp. 27-33. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Barkan, J. H., & Bernal, E. M. (1991). Gifted education for bilingual and limited English proficiency students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 35,* 144-147.

Cohen, L. M. (1989). What the children taught me: Comments on 'The purpose of education for gifted black students'. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II,* pp. 246-254. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Coleman, M. R. , & Gallagher, J. J. (1992). *Report on State Policies Related to the Identification of Gifted Students.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.

Ewing, N. J. & Yong, F. I. (1992). A comparative study of the learning style of preferences among gifted African-American, Mexican-American, and American-born Chinese middle grade students. *Roeper Review, 14*(3), 120-123.

Faas, L. A. (1982). *Cultural and educational variables involved in identifying and educating gifted and talented American Indian children.* Paper presented at the Gifted Minorities Conference, Tucson, AZ. (ERIC Reproduction Service Document No. ED 255 010).

Florey, J., & Tafoya, N. (1988). *Identifying gifted and talented American Indian students; An overview.* ERIC Digest. Las Cruces, NM: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 269 810).

Ford, D. Y. (1992). Determinants of underachievement at perceived by gifted, above-average, and average black students. *Roeper Review, 14*(3), 130-136.

Frasier, M. M. (1989). Identification of gifted black students: Developing new perspectives. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II,* pp. 213-225. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Hadaway, N. & Marek-Schroer, M. F. (1992). Multidimensional assessment of the gifted minority student. *Roeper Review, 15*(2), 73-77.

Hilliard, A. G. (1976). Alternatives to IQ testing: An approach to the identification of gifted "minority" children (Final report). Sacramento, CA: California State Department of Education, Sacramento Division of Special Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service NO. ED 147 009).

Horowitz, F. D., & O'Brien, M. (1985). Perspective on research the development. In F. D. Horowitz and M. O'Briend (Eds.). *The gifted and talented: Developmental perspectives*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Leung, E. K. (1981). *The identification and social problems of the gifted bilingual-bicultural children*. New Orleans: council for Exceptional Children Conference on the Exceptional Bilingual Child. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. 203 653).

Little Soldier, L. (1985). To soar with eagles: Enculturation and acculturation of Indian children. *Childhood Education*, Jan/Feb., 185-191.

Locust, C. (1988). wounding the spirit: Discrimination and traditional American Indian belief systems. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*(3), 315-330.

Montgomery, D. (1989). Identification of giftedness among American Indian people. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II*, pp. 79-90. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Noley, G. (1989). The foster children of American education. In G. E. Thomas (Ed.). *U.S. Race Relations in the 1980s and 1990s: Challenges and Alternatives*, pp. 239-247. New York: Hemisphere.

Patton, J. M. , Prillamon, R. , & VanTassell-Baska, J. (1990). The nature and extent of programs for the disadvantaged gifted in the United States and Territories. *Gifted child Quarterly, 34*, 94-96.

Rhodes, L. (1992). Focusing attention on the individual in identification of gifted black students. *Roeper Review, 14*(3), 108-110.

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.

Sparling, S. S. (1989). Gifted black students: Curriculum and teaching strategies. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II*, pp. 259-269. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Spicker, H. H. (1992). Identifying and enriching rural gifted children. *Educational Horizons*, 70, 60-65.

Tippiconnic, J. W., III. (1990). American Indians: Education, demographics, and the 1990s. In G. E. Thomas (Ed.), *U.S. Race Relations in the 1980s and 1990s: Challenges and Alternatives*, pp. 249-257. New York: Hemisphere.

Tonemah, S. A. (1987). Assessing American Indian gifted and talented students' abilities. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 10*, 181-194.

Torrance, E. P. (1989). A reaction to 'Gifted black students: Curriculum and teaching strategies.' In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II*, pp. 270-274. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Zappia, I. A. (1989). Identification of gifted Hispanic students: A multidimensional view. In C. J. Maker and S. W. Schiever (Eds.), *Critical issues in gifted education: Defensible programs for cultural and ethnic minorities, Volume II*, pp. 19-26. Austin, TX: Pro-ed.